

The University of Chicago

JEWISH INTERMARRIAGE IN CHICAGO

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
JUNE, 1940

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Reprinted from
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SOCIAL FACTORS IN AMALGAMATION

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● This article deals with the social conditions under which amalgamation occurs between endogamous groups, and is based on a study made in 1938 and 1939 of 183 cases of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage between white people in Chicago.

Cultural disorganization and intermarriage. Some degree of cultural disorganization and the resulting social disintegration are necessary before intermarriage can occur between endogamous groups, for the rate of intermarriage is dependent upon the strength of the endogamous attitudes and the effectiveness of the social controls which implement them. There must be some breakdown in the mores before a person can even think of loving or marrying in the face of endogamy.¹ Thus, a white woman reared in a strongly anti-Negro milieu in the southern states can hardly conceive of falling in love with a Negro. The following case illustrates the attitude of an orthodox Jewess.

Jewess. I met a Gentile boy through a Jewish friend, my roommate's brother, who took him over to see us one day. Because I liked him as an individual—he was a nice *goy* [Gentile man], you see—my old prejudices were pushed aside. But the weight of my whole background was against it. A *goy* was a *goy*, and I was a Jew, and that's all there was to it—like east and west, you know. It was all right to go with him—the boy was a darling. But to marry him—I couldn't do it.

Even if a person does love a member of the out-group, in a well-integrated endogamous group intermarriage will be prevented by such social controls as family and wider group pressures.

¹ Cultural disorganization is affected by (a) the amount of acculturation produced through social contact between the groups, (b) the relative size and density of the groups, and (c) the sex ratio within each group.

Jewess. [She met a Gentile man.] When he kept coming [to see her] my parents told me they just didn't think it right for me, a Jewish girl, to accept invitations from a non-Jew, and they wanted me to promise not to go out with him any more. This I refused to do. Then one day when he called for me, Father came in and just ushered him out. I continued to see him, but for a while he didn't come to the house—I met him outside. And my parents would keep after me, and told me that I'd certainly go to the devil if I kept on disobeying them. I was twenty-one when I met him, and I wished that I could do as I pleased, and I resented this one and that one in my family dictating to me. But there's no doubt that I was greatly influenced by them. After all, I did like my immediate family, and I felt that there wouldn't be much friendship if I brought him in. I felt that parental consent was necessary—I was still under the protection of my family, and I didn't have the experience of living alone. I was influenced by my family when it came down to actually getting married. My older sister especially made me decide against it; she told me that intermarriage had just that many more problems; she said, "In marriage one likes to feel some security."

In the cases of intermarriage investigated, it seems that when a couple does intermarry it is because the social controls which come into play are not effective enough. As might be expected, the opposition of the family is the most influential control against intermarriage. In the more integrated communities parents do not stop with persuasion alone when faced with the prospect of an intermarriage in the family. They may dig up rumors to defame the character of the person from the out-group, and conjure up the prejudices which exist toward that out-group in order to prove that such a marriage cannot succeed, remind the person contemplating intermarriage of all the harm and unhappiness he will cause his family by thus breaking away from them, and so on.

Cases of wide group controls are to be found in the data on Jewish intermarriage.

Gentile woman. [She met her husband at a hospital where she was a nurse and he an interne.] When the nurses would talk in the dormitory they'd say, "Oh, are you going out with the Hebe tonight? Why don't

you go out with a white man for a change?" When they found out that I was going to be married one of the older nurses said to me, "Oh, that's too bad, but at least it's a good thing he's a nice fellow."

I thought that the Jews just imagined they were persecuted, but after I married I found out that it was real. I was supposed to get a scholarship and become head nurse, but after they found out I was married to a Jew, I didn't get either. I went up to the office and asked for an interview with the dean, who told me in just so many words that the marriage didn't meet with her approval. We had quite a fracas—I was in hysterics when I left there.

A large part of the opposition of the intermarrying person's family is itself due to the fear of "what the neighbors will say," when these neighbors are members of the same well-integrated group.

Jewess. When my parents found out that I was married, my mother wanted to sit *shiveh* [rites for the dead] for me, but my brothers and sisters stopped her. My mother really didn't object for religious reasons. She was afraid of what the Jewish circles would say, and also, she had four other daughters, and who would marry them if there was a *goy* in the family? The whole *mishpocheh* [family] would be *traif* [ritually unclean]!

A third type of social control is the intermarrying individual's own conscience, which is a reflection of the mores of his group.

Jewess. In spite of the fact that I was very liberal minded the problem [of intermarriage] comes up in you. I knew that Jewish people aren't supposed to intermarry and I had that feeling which I had to fight out. Judaism is built on tradition, and the thing that helped it to survive was non-intermarriage. I said to myself, "Who am I to break it? Who am I to break the age-long tradition?" And there was a bitter conflict in me. But I wasn't religious.

To combat opposition to his marriage, the intermarrying person may develop rationalizations to give his act a social sanction.

Gentile woman. I felt young enough and in love enough to go out and crusade a bit and throw over the prejudices of the world. That gave

me a moral justification for marrying. I felt, "There should not be any intolerance—I should weld these two things together and have humanity profit—it would be very fine because it's the way to do away with these differences and intolerances. If there was close association like in marriage all this intolerance would be wiped out." I was very young and idealistic then.

Amalgamation can take place through casual sexual relations and liaisons as well as through intermarriage, but the third alone implies social equality. Hence, no particular social controls may be brought into play when a sexual relationship is formed on the basis of the first two types of amalgamation, but strong sanctions may exist to prohibit the third type. To illustrate, in the South a white man may visit a Negro brothel or keep a Negro mistress, but intermarriage between the two races is prohibited by law.² In Jewish-Gentile relations as studied by the writer both groups often prefer to have their members contract a liaison rather than intermarry with a person of the out-group, particularly if the member of the in-group is a man.

The extent to which intermarriage is socially sanctioned may be estimated from the conditions under which the marriage ceremony occurs. When a marriage is secret, with no one present but the legally required witnesses, it is usually the result of social disapproval, and the local Gretna Green—Crown Point in the case of Chicago—is often the scene of intermarriages. But if a wedding is announced beforehand, and an elaborate ceremony takes place with the relatives and friends of both parties present, the intermarriage is at least overtly sanctioned. Since the custom in the United States is to be married according to religious rites, the person officiating at an intermarriage is often significant in foreshadowing the trend of

² Thirty states prohibit interracial marriages: C. G. Vernier, *American Family Laws* (Stanford, 1931), Vol. I, pp. 204-9.

acculturation of the intermarried couple. Or the religious problem may be dodged by having a civil ceremony; in many cases this also shows the lack of affiliation of the couple to their respective religious groups as a result of emancipation from their cultures in general. On the other hand, in order to placate the two families, multiple ceremonies may be held, one according to the religion of each group; sometimes these are preceded by a civil marriage, and then the couple is intermarried indeed—triple so. In the cases investigated, almost half the marriages were civil, and about one quarter were secret.

Social contact and intermarriage. It is an obvious fact that social contact is necessary before intermarriage can occur. In both Europe and the United States it is still customary in most circles for women to stay closer to their families than do men; the latter more often go out into the world and thus have increased opportunities to meet people from other groups. Thus, among the parents of white children in the United States in 1920, the father was foreign and the mother native in 237.6 per 1,000 like marriages, while the mother was foreign and the father native in only 138.9 per 1,000 like marriages.³ The same is true among the Jews; in the cases studied 100 were of Jewish males, and 83 of Jewish females.

A second result of the fact that social contact is a necessary preliminary to intermarriage is that, where opportunities for such contact are restricted by group prejudices, the types of contact available determine the kinds of people who intermarry. Thus, as a result of anti-Oriental sentiment in the United States, "the Japanese and the White fall in love while they are working under the same roof."⁴ Similarly, because of anti-Semitism, it was found

³ N. Carpenter, *Immigrants and Their Children*, U.S. Census Monographs, No. 7, pp. 234-35, Washington, 1927.

⁴ M. Ishikawa, "A Study of the Intermarried Japanese Families in U.S.A.," *Cultural Nippon*, 3:470, 1935.

that only one fourth of the couples studied met through friends, at parties, et cetera; the rest became acquainted through institutional channels, e.g., one third met in business. Inasmuch as there are few opportunities for Jews to meet Gentiles of their own class, as well as because of the lower social status of the Jewish group, Jews tend to marry below their own class. Thus, only 50 per cent of the Jewish men married within their class, while 72 per cent of the Gentile men married within theirs. Forty-four per cent of the Jewish men married in a class below their own, and only 6 per cent married above; 9 per cent of the Gentile men married below them, and 19 per cent married above. But this is influenced also by another factor besides the types of social contact which exist between the two groups. Analogous to the situation among the American Negroes, where men tend to marry women lighter than themselves, though of a lower socioeconomic class, because of the great social value attached to light skin color,⁵ in Jewish intermarriages the Jews tend to marry Gentiles of a lower class because of the higher social status of the Gentile group.

⁵ M. J. Herskovits, *The American Negro* (New York, 1930), pp. 62-66.

JEWISH-GENTILE INTERMARRIAGE IN CHICAGO

BY
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JEWISH-GENTILE INTERMARRIAGE IN CHICAGO

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Chicago, Illinois

IN A STUDY of Jewish intermarriage in Chicago, the writer found that the people who intermarried fell into fairly well-defined classes, though in some cases an individual might intermarry for more than one reason and therefore represent a combination of types. Also, the writer does not maintain that all members of these classes in the population intermarry, but rather that those who do, can be classified according to these types.

The data of this study are based on 183 cases of Jewish intermarriage between Caucasians living in Chicago, plus seven cases of nonintermarriage, i.e., cases of Jews who were friendly with, or thought of marrying, a Gentile, but did not because of social controls operating against it. These latter cases functioned as a kind of control, by means of which were checked the hypotheses as to the conditions under which intermarriage does not take place.

The data were gathered by the investigator between 1937 and 1938. An attempt was made to get a representative sample of the Jewish population by means of class and ecological criteria. Cases were taken from the poorest people in the slums on the one extreme and from the well-to-do living in the suburbs on the other. However, the writer knows of no way of determining whether his small sample is actually representative of the population because information regarding religious affiliation does not appear on marriage licenses in the United States. Certainly the cases that the investigator interviewed personally were not selected in a completely random fashion because they were gathered by asking acquaintances and the people interviewed for other cases of intermarriage. The material procured through social agencies is also not random, for by the very nature of the case, the clients of such agencies tend to be from the poorer classes. However, since cases were obtained from all areas where Jewish people live, and from all classes, there is at least a presumption in favor of considering the sample sufficiently representative of the totality of Jewish intermarriages in Chicago for the purposes of this investigation. It is on this supposition that the generalizations will have to rest, pending a more exhaustive inventory of intermarried couples. The fact that only a small number of cases have been used was unavoidable because the investigator could not afford to continue the study beyond enough cases to give what he hopes are suggestive hypotheses. The generalizations are not presented as verified propositions.

Data on eighty-seven of the cases were gathered through interviews. The material on the other ninety-six cases was obtained from the case records of the following agencies: Chicago Home for Girls, Chicago Relief Administration, Illinois State Training School for Girls, Institute for Juvenile Research, Jewish Children Bureau, Jewish Social Service Bureau, and United

Charities of Chicago. Whenever feasible, information from the records was supplemented by interviews with the social workers on the various cases. Usually, the clients themselves could not be interviewed because of the confidential nature of the relationship between the client and the social worker. As a result, much of the data in this set of cases is fragmentary.

The following techniques were used in gathering data. (a) Direct and participatory observation of intermarried couples. (b) Interview. A free interview technique was employed, in which the informant was told the general subject of interest to the interviewer, and then told to say whatever he thought relevant. This was used with the idea that if the informant was allowed to say what was on his mind, his fundamental attitudes would come to light. After the informant was through, the interviewer asked supplementary questions to complete the picture he wanted. In order to check on the material gathered, the informants involved in a given case were interviewed separately whenever feasible and were asked about each other as well as about themselves. The data were then compared. The relevant parts of the interview were recorded verbatim, for after some experimentation the interviewer found that the informants did not seem to become inhibited if a notebook was used during the interview, and it was felt that the manner in which the informant expressed himself, itself revealed his attitudes. (c) Personal documents. A large portion of the material of each interview is in autobiographical form, and when available, letters and other documents were used. (d) A questionnaire was used to obtain data useful for statistical purposes.

The following is a summary of the eight types discovered.

*I. The Unorganized or Demoralized Person.*¹ The disorganization in deteriorated areas of the city produces people who do not conform to the customs of the culture at large, and who constitute the bulk of juvenile delinquents and adult lawbreakers—the underworld. As in other aspects of the customs of their group, they are not often restrained by ethnic prejudices; consequently, promiscuity and liaisons between such people of different groups occur, and in some cases lead to marriage, particularly when the woman becomes pregnant. This type has been identified before; W. E. B. du Bois said of the intermarried Negro-whites “of the lowest social grade” in Philadelphia, “Many of these are cases of permanent cohabitation and the women for the most part are or were prostitutes. They live in the slums, mostly, and in some cases have lived together many years.”²

[Jewess] I was in Pete the Dago’s gang, but I belonged to one of the fellows—he was a Gentile. He’s now my husband.

¹ On the distinction between unorganized and demoralized persons, see W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, II: 1647–1653, 1777–1778, New York, 1927, 2nd ed.

² *The Philadelphia Negro*, 365, *Publ. of Univ. of Penn. in Pol. Econ. and Public Law*, vol. 14, Philadelphia, 1899.

II. The Promiscuous Person. This class consists of people who wish to have casual sexual relationships without being involved in any social obligations. Members of the same group usually meet each other as part of a web of social interrelations; they know each other's families and have mutual friends. However, when meeting people from another group, this social nexus is often at a minimum and consequently, promiscuous men and women find that in contact with members of outgroups, the relationship can be as casual as they wish with a minimum of social ties and obligations.³ As one man put it, there is little danger of "entangling alliances" in this sort of relationship. Although this type of person is not looking for a spouse in the outgroup, sometimes affection develops which results in intermarriage.

[Gentile man] I went with Jewish women mainly, and that's how I met my wife. The opportunity for meeting Christian women was there, but I wasn't interested. I was only interested in two things—company and a bed partner. The Christian women I knew were the sisters of my friends and so on, and I didn't want to get entangled like that.

III. The Adventurous Person. This is the kind of person who goes outside of his own group in search of stimulating experiences; he is attracted by the novel and exotic, either sexually or intellectually. Lahontan notes:

If we may credit the common Report, there are more than one or two of the Ladies of this Country [i.e., Canada], whose Constancy and Vertue has held out against the Attacks of several Officers, and at the same time vouchsaf'd a free access to these nasty Lechers [the Indians]. 'Tis presum'd their Compliance was the Effect of Curiosity, rather than of any nice Relish; for, in a word, the Savages are neither brisk, nor constant.⁴

On a sexual plane, elaborate myths have arisen about the attractions of the outgroup. In the course of his interviews, the writer was often assured by Gentile men that Jewesses are more voluptuous than Gentile women; and Jews sometimes stated that Gentile women are more immoral than Jewesses. This is comparable to the ideas of white people in the United States about the sexuality of the Negro.⁵

[Gentile man] I'd try to pick up Jewish girls because they're hotter than the girls I knew.

The following case illustrates the effect of exoticism on an intellectual:⁶

[Gentile man] [He left a small town in Arkansas to attend college.] A Jewish schoolmate took me to some Jewish parties where they sang Russian and Jewish songs which had a vitality I'd never known before. And the strangeness and newness of it had an exotic effect. [He soon became part of this Jewish circle, of which

³ "By way of lighter entertainment he visited the public dance halls on Saturday, for he was fond of dancing and had a purely sexual impulse to attach himself to women without having to saddle himself with responsibilities of long duration." P. Gauguin, *Paul Gauguin*, 33, tr. A. G. Chater, New York, 1937.

⁴ L. A. de Lahontan, *Nouveaux voyages dans l'amerique septentrionale*, I: 65, The Hague, 1703.

⁵ J. Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, 143-144, 160-162, 167-168, New Haven, 1937.

⁶ Cf. R. Bourne, *History of a Literary Radical*, 289-290, ed. V. W. Brooks, New York, 1920.

his future wife was a member.] They were leading me in a direction that I had vaguely felt—it burst upon me that here are people that had a rounded cosmopolitan as opposed to a provincial outlook, and against which I had rebelled without finding any outlet. I admired them and what they stood for, and I wanted to rise to their stature. They interested me in things I had never dreamed of—I had never heard any of the modern French composers before, for instance.

IV. The Detached Person. This category consists of people who, though they may come from a well integrated group, find themselves in a community where there are not enough members of their own group to permit them to participate in their own culture and marry within their group.

[Jew] [He was born and reared in the Pale of Settlement in Tsarist Russia.] We lived our own [Jewish] life and almost entirely ignored the *goyim* [Gentiles], especially since it was largely a Jewish town. My father was an active *chasid* [an orthodox sect]; I went to *yeshiveh* [theological seminary].

Things were different when I came to this country alone and went to a town in Indiana. There're very few Jews there and I had to mix with the outside, with all sorts of people. I felt lost, and went through a severe psychological crisis. My old ideas and values were turned topsy turvy and I couldn't find myself. I was a studious boy, so the only thing I did was spend a lot of time in the library. It was in this way that I made my friends, including my wife who was a librarian there. The people in the library were friendly and became interested in me; they invited me to their homes and introduced me to people.

V. The Rebellious Person. In a situation where different cultures meet, comparison of the customs of their own group with those of other cultures with which there is contact leads some people to question the validity of their own customs and perhaps to rebel against them. Among Jews, for instance, the elaborate orthodox ritual often loses its hold on the generations born in the United States and in some cases the taboos arouse irritation because of the constraints which they impose.

[Jew] As I grew older I had the feeling somewhat of a rebel, and trying to break away from the conventional Jewish thing. And so I felt a feeling of contempt against anything Jewish—I looked on myself as someone above all this.

It was found that in immigrant areas intermarriage may be the result of a revolt against the social organization, specifically the family life, of the person's group. This is particularly true of Gentile women of nationalities where the wives are subordinated to their husbands, as is the case in immigrant groups which frequently live contiguously to Jewish neighborhoods. Contact with Jews may cause them to notice the stronger integration of the Jewish family and the higher status of the Jewish wife. Such women may seek Jews who, in their own words, "make wonderful husbands."

VI. The Marginal Person. Where there is a subordination-domination relationship between two groups, a member of the subordinate group may identify himself with the dominant group, having taken over its culture, but he is not accepted by the latter and instead is categorized within the subordinate group. Thus, he is marginal to both groups. R. E. Park has analyzed this type of person in the context of the acculturation process.

When . . . the walls of the medieval ghetto were torn down and the Jew was permitted to participate in the cultural life of the peoples among whom he lived, there appeared a new type of personality, namely, a cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and his traditions, and not quite accepted, because of racial prejudice, in the new society in which he now sought to find a place. He was a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which was never completely interpenetrated and fused.⁷

Marginal people sometimes amalgamate with members of the dominant group in order to increase their own status or that of their offspring. For instance, in the days of slavery, southern Negro women would often encourage advances of white men to "raise the color" of their children.

[The southern Negroes] have accepted the contempt of their masters to that degree that they profess, and really seem to feel it for themselves, and the faintest admixture of white blood in their black veins appears at once, by common consent of their own race, to raise them in the scale of humanity.⁸

The following is a case of marginality in an intermarried Jewess.

[Jewess] Not until I got to high school was I really conscious of the difference between Jews and Gentiles—I became aware that there was a Jewish problem. As soon as I became aware of the situation, I became resentful and ashamed, and on the whole I was inclined to feel envious that I wasn't a Gentile. I was told to be proud that I was a Jew, but I never felt that way. I felt, and still do today, that it was an unfortunate circumstance.

I think that the reason [for her intermarriage] was my desire to escape from the stigma of being identified with Jews. I would have a non-Jewish name and would become part of the non-Jewish group. I felt it was a distinct advantage. I was also glad for the children's sake that they wouldn't be Jews.

VII. The Acculturated Person. In speaking of the American Negro, Herskovits says:

Because of his color he is penalized wherever he turns. . . . Is it strange, then, that he should unconsciously glorify that which is like the traits of the group enjoying every opportunity that is denied him? Is it surprising that he should term Negroid hair and features, for example, "bad," and the less Negroid "good," and that the lighter colored . . . should have the advantage in his community?⁹

While it is undoubtedly true that members of the subordinate group may give prestige to traits which are characteristic of the dominant group for the advantages they bring, on the basis of his data, the writer can distinguish an additional factor which produces this phenomenon. Through acculturation, members of the subordinate group may take over the standards of the dominant group to such an extent that they look upon their own traits from the latter's point of view and give prestige to those traits which are esteemed by the dominant group even though they still identify themselves with the subordinate group. For instance, such a type of person among the Jews studied, having become Americanized, judges members of

⁷ "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, May 1928, 881-893, pages 891-892.

⁸ F. A. Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839*, 194, New York, 1863. ⁹ M. J. Herskovits, *The American Negro*, 58-59, New York, 1930.

his group not on the basis of its standards but on those of the dominant group. Consequently, on a physical level, the Jew takes over the Gentile American standards of beauty; on the level of customs, such a person intermarries because he cannot find anyone in his own group who is "refined enough" for him, as some people expressed it, that is, a person who is acceptable according to the standards of the dominant group. The writer suspects that the same condition prevails among American Negroes to some extent. At any rate, the following is an example of an acculturated Jewess.

[Jewess] I wanted to marry a real handsome man—tall and blond, and athletic. I never saw a Jewish fellow like that.

VIII. The Emancipated Person. This class consists of people who, through acculturation or personal contact with members of the outgroup, have lost those traits which tend to prevent intermarriage. At a minimum, such a person has to some extent lost the endogamous attitudes of his own group and the prejudices against the outgroup—at least enough to permit him to treat a member of the outgroup as an object of affection. The extent of emancipation may range from this extreme to the other, where, e.g., the Jew knows little of Jewish culture and is merely aware of his Jewish descent.

[Jew] Before I met my wife I went out with both Jewish and Gentile men and women. It was indifferent to me—I went out with anyone who intrested me.

TABLE I. TYPES OF INTERMARRIED PERSONS IN THE CASES STUDIED¹

Types	Number	Percent	Male				Female			
			Jewish ²		Gentile ²		Jewish		Gentile	
			Num.	Pct.	Num.	Pct.	Num.	Pct.	Num.	Pct.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Disorganized	48	16.6	10	3.5	13	4.5	17	5.9	8	2.8
Promiscuous	18	6.2	7	2.4	8	2.8	1	.4	2	.7
Adventurous	33	11.4	9	3.1	11	3.8	4	1.4	9	3.1
Rebellious	17	5.9	6	2.1	1	.4	5	1.7	5	1.7
Marginal	15	5.2	8	2.8	0	—	7	2.4	0	—
Detached	5	1.7	3	1.0	0	—	2	.7	0	—
Acculturated	11	3.8	9	3.1	0	—	2	.7	0	—
Emancipated	142	49.1	38	13.2	35	12.1	18	6.2	51	17.7
Total	289	100.0	90	31.1	68	23.5	56	19.4	75	26.0
Unclassified	67	—	10	—	14	—	17	—	26	—

¹ The criteria of classification are those given in the discussion of the types. As previously stated, some people fall into two or more categories. In such cases, the individual has been put in the category which the writer thinks is predominant.

² For total numbers and percentages of Jewish and Gentiles, irrespective of sex, add figures in columns 3 and 7, 4 and 8 (Jewish), 5 and 9, 6 and 10 (Gentiles) for each category.

Table I summarizes the types found. The *Emancipated* contains almost half, and with the *Rebellious*, *Marginal*, and *Acculturated*, comprises 64 percent of all the cases. This suggests that acculturation between Jews and Gentiles is the main factor in these intermarriages.

ADJUSTMENT IN JEWISH-GENTILE INTERMARRIAGES

J. S. SLOTKIN

Washington, D. C.

THIS paper deals with the adjustment of intermarried couples, as studied in 183 cases of Jewish-Gentile intermarriage between white people in Chicago.

THE INTERMARRIED COUPLE AND THEIR ADJUSTMENT TO SOCIETY

In Jewish intermarriages the couple must make an adjustment to society, inasmuch as they represent two different and relatively antagonistic groups. The couple may be accepted by both groups from which they come, by one only, or by neither. In the cases studied, as far as the relatives and close friends of intermarried people are concerned, open conflict usually ceases after marriage, and they become more or less reconciled. This is particularly true if the intermarriage is considered to be a "good match," i.e., if the member of the out-group has some characteristic which has particular social value to the in-group.

Gentile man. I think that she [his Jewish mother-in-law] finally became a little proud of my work in school—in other words, she had the typical attitude towards scholarship that so many Jews have. She once said to my wife, "*Acht!* If he were only circumcized!"

As a result of further acquaintance with the spouse from the out-group, the family may lose its prejudice against that person, and reconciliation may be effected.

Gentile woman. That trouble only lasted a year. They [her parents] met my husband a few times and saw that after all he was a pretty nice guy. I think my father's death brought us closer than anything; he was killed in an accident and my husband was very attentive to my mother. She seemed to lose her prejudice.

The sentimental ties between grandparents and grandchildren may produce reconciliation after the birth of offspring to the intermarried couple.

Gentile woman. We ran away and went to the justice of the peace. I wrote to my father regularly, but he never answered a word until the baby was born; it was his first grandchild. My husband's parents wouldn't even meet me—I never saw them until our baby was four months old, and we had been married two years before I had my baby. It was the baby that reconciled them, too.

But in relatively well integrated communities the couple's parents may never become reconciled to the intermarriage.

Jew. When I married my wife, to my mother I was more or less dead. They sat *shivah* [rites for the dead].

In the cases investigated, 57 percent of the intermarried people were either partially or entirely accepted by both families; 20 percent of the Jews were not accepted by their own families, and 23 percent were not accepted by that of the spouse; 16 percent of the Gentiles were not accepted by their own families, and 27 percent were not accepted by that of the spouse. The higher percentage of non-acceptance by the Jewish families leads one to presume that endogamy is stronger in the Jewish group than the Gentile.

Dropping of more casual acquaintances takes place after Jewish intermarriage for two reasons: first, the acquaintances may no longer accept the member of their own group, or will not accept the spouse from the out-group; secondly, the cultural differences between the spouse of the out-group and the acquaintances from the in-group may be so great as to produce friction.

Gentile woman. Christian people who weren't close friends and by some slight indication showed that they didn't like the idea of my marrying a Jew, I dropped.

Jew. My wife is a good deal different from some of these Jewish women I know. I think they feel a little strange with her—they don't know what to do with her; she isn't typical of the women in the group. We've dropped contact with the typical Jewish people who do the typically Jewish thing. When I was a bachelor those people were all right for me, but now that I'm married the people sense the difference.

No matter how they try to identify themselves with the group in which they live, in Jewish intermarriages the member of the out-group is rarely entirely accepted in well integrated communities.

Gentile woman. Most of my intimate friends are Jewish. They talk about things they don't like about Jews when I'm around. But sometimes even my best

friends say to me, "You really can't accept our religion. You like us, and work with us, but really in your heart you can't accept our religion." Some of the Jews I know make it very apparent that I'm a Gentile—some of them have snubbed me.

Two types of adjustment may take place to prevent non-acceptance of the intermarried couple by the group in which they live. The member of the in-group may hide the fact of his intermarriage, or the group identity of the spouse from the out-group may be hidden.

Gentile man. The place where I work is anti-Semitic, and I haven't told them of my marriage or my change of religion [i.e., his conversion to Judaism before his marriage].

Jewess. When my husband taught in Arkansas I didn't tell anyone that I was a Jew. We were thought of as a Gentile family.

ACCULTURATION BETWEEN THE INTERMARRIED COUPLE

Since the people who intermarry come from groups with different cultures, intermarriage brings about accommodation between the customs of the intermarried couple. Therefore, amalgamation may lead to changes in language, religion, cuisine, friendships, personal habits, etc.

Gentile woman. We were married by a Jewish rabbi after I went through the conversion. I dropped my given name and use my converted name.

I prepare a number of Jewish dishes.

I understand a great deal of Yiddish; I've picked up quite a lot.

I think I'm certainly much more talkative and colorful and emotional than I was before my marriage. I have all the expressions and talk with my hands. I've got that sing-songy Jewish inflection and intonation, and the shrugging of the shoulders—I've acquired them all.

I take attacks against Jews very personally. I live among Jews and I work among Jews, and their problems are my problems.

While it is usually only the more overt traits necessary for accommodation, which are adopted, sometimes even such things as attitudes and values are taken over.

Gentile woman. I belong to the sisterhood of a synagogue and all sorts of Jewish organizations. I was never formally converted—it came to me gradually over a period of years. I go to temple now, and it fills my needs—it fills my heart. I have a *seder* [Pass-over service] at home, because I like ceremonies. We

don't have any Christmas tree; it's pretty, but it's against our religion. I don't believe in the stories about Jesus. He's no deity; he was a fine man, but he had to have a father.

I'm a Jew. I've built my life around it. The Jews are my people. I'm a Jew because I want to be—I've read and studied those old laws. The other Jewish women are Jewish because they can't help themselves; I feel that I'm more Jewish than they are, sometimes.

I've learned quite a lot of Jewish; I cook only in the Jewish style.

I don't like to hear remarks against the Jews. Once in a P. T. A. there was some discussion against the Jews, and I got up and said my little piece; at the end I told them that they were discriminating against me. They laughed and thought I was crazy, but then I told them that I was Jewish.¹

But no matter to what extent the individual thinks that he has assimilated himself to the new group—Jewish or Gentile—the behavior patterns established in childhood cannot be completely effaced.

Jew. I believe I have an ideal marriage. But you can't change the spots on a leopard, and for a Jew to intermarry—it just doesn't seem as if it fits. The Jew can never be assimilated—they're set apart like a Chinaman or a nigger. A year ago I had the sad misfortune of losing my father, blessed be his memory, and I reverted back—a gypsy always remains a gypsy. I joined a conservative *shul* [synagogue].

If both the husband and wife are each strongly attached to those customs which have high social value in their respective groups, no compromise may be possible and each will then carry on the customs of his own group. In the cases investigated, this is particularly true of religion.

Jew. I used to go to temple every now and then before I was married, and I still do. My wife attends her church every holiday, too. We both go alone.

If the intermarried couple has been affected by the increasing secularization of American life, they may ignore their religious differences and not participate in any religious activities. Otherwise those Jews who are not sufficiently Americanized to become converted to one of the usual Christian denominations, sometimes join the Ethical Culture movement or become Christian Scientists.

So far the traits which are adopted through acculturation have been examined; let us now con-

sider the question of the trend of the acculturation process. To a large extent this depends upon the community in which the intermarried couple lives. If they reside in a Jewish community, the Gentile may become converted to Judaism, learn Yiddish, drop most of his old Gentile friends, and in general adopt the more overt customs of the Jewish culture. On the other hand, if the intermarried couple settles in a non-Jewish area, the trend of acculturation is usually toward the Gentile group. This is a result of the social controls operating in each community.

But it is significant that even if the Gentile does adopt certain Jewish customs, it is usually a formality, a matter of accommodation in order to reduce friction with the Jewish parents-in-law and community, and does not result in any extensive change in behavior patterns.

Gentile woman. I was converted out of respect to his father. I consider myself a Christian—you never feel a Jew. I don't enjoy the services—I don't understand much about it, and I have to read the book from back to the front. I go because it gives my father-in-law more satisfaction than anything else in the world.

On the other hand, when the couple lives in a Gentile area, the Jew tends to drop many of his Jewish customs. Even if he still identifies himself with the Jewish group, he tends no longer to participate in its activities.

Jewess. I consider myself a Jew. I used to go to the temple before I was married, but never since. But half of my friends are still Jewish.

One of her Jewish friends. They tend to the non-Jewish more than the Jewish—she doesn't consider herself part of the Jewish community in any way. If you ask her she'll say, "Of course I'm Jewish," but she never does anything about it. I never send her Christmas cards, but she always sends me a Christmas card. They keep all of the *goysisheh* [Gentile] holidays and none of the Jewish ones. And though she says she's going to let the children decide their own religion, since they don't have any Jewishness around how will her kids know about it?

Therefore, on the whole, the trend in the Jewish intermarriages studied is toward the dominant Gentile American culture on two counts. First, even if the couple lives in a Jewish community, because the latter is a minority group the Gentile tends to take over Jewish traits only superficially in order to accommodate himself to the group. Second, when the couple lives in a Gentile area,

¹ Of Scandinavian descent, she is Nordic-Alpine in physical type, with the former predominating.

the Jew is rapidly forced to give up his group customs, not only on account of the necessity for accommodation, but also because of the lack of opportunity to participate in the customs of his own minority group even if he wants to. For example, the Gentile only infrequently takes part in the activities of the Jewish institutions—religious, charitable, social, etc.—which are among the strongest forces in maintaining the integration of minority groups. On the other hand, if the Jew does not join equivalent Gentile organizations, he at least tends to stop participating in Jewish institutions, and thus the minority Jewish group is forced to relinquish some of the most effective means it has to prevent assimilation of its members into the dominant majority group. As a result, in the cases investigated, even according to the most generous interpretation, only about one-quarter of the couples could be considered to tend toward the Jewish culture, while in three-quarters of the cases the trend was toward the Gentile group.

ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THE INTERMARRIED COUPLE

Since people with different ways of acting find it difficult to adjust to each other, it may be expected that intermarriages between people from different cultures will result in more marital conflicts than marriages within the same group. Consequently, the stability of intermarriage can be taken as an index of the cultural and social accommodation between the husband and wife.

Statistics on divorce among intermarried Jews in Berlin show that the divorce rate in such marriages was approximately double that of like marriages.² Also, marital conflicts tend to disrupt intermarriages quicker than like marriages. For instance, in the figures available for Chicago, almost three-quarters of the cases of desertion, "the poor man's divorce," took place in the first four years of marriage among intermarried couples, while less than half occurred in the same period for like marriages.³

The greater the difference between the cultures of the people who intermarry, the greater the possibilities for marital conflict; and conversely, the less difference, the less conflict. When the

husband and wife are from very different cultural backgrounds, there may be a great deal of domestic discord because of such differences.

Jew. My wife's attitude was that she should be protected, but I always had the feeling that if a man's done a day's work he's discharged his duties; among the Gentiles the women are pampered—there are the men to do the dirty work. I was used to having the woman keep up her part of the family, and even, especially in the case when the husband is a scholar, to have the woman hold the fort for the family.

When both husband and wife are highly Americanized, there is little discord because of cultural differences, and if any conflict does occur it is usually between the couple and the wider group, rather than between husband and wife.

Gentile woman. It never occurs to me that we are intermarried. To me it isn't an intermarriage because there's no difference—to me it's not any different than if I had married anyone else. There's no racial difference, and we both don't have any religion, and he was born in a small town, too, so that our background's almost the same.

In most instances of marital discord in the cases investigated, cultural conflict was not so much a cause as an effect of domestic difficulties. In only 4 cases were cultural differences the major reason for divorce or desertion; in 18 cases such differences did not seem to enter at all as a factor. It appears that what often happens is what was found in 7 other cases, namely, that friction arises on some other account—economic hardship, personal incompatibility, etc.—and then latent prejudices are expressed in these situations and so aggravate marital conflict.

Jewess. My husband is good to me, but if I ever had to do it over again I never would do it. Whenever we argue he always throws it up to me. He calls me a dirty Jew, says it's my Jewish blood, and so on.

The conflicts resulting from intermarriage may make one more conscious of the difference between the two groups, increase the individual's feeling of identity with his own group, and thus augment the conflicts already existing.

Jewess. It was brought up all the time that William was Gentile and I was Jewish. For instance, when I'd be introduced to people they'd ask me how come I was called Mac—[a Scotch name, since she speaks English with a Yiddish accent]. Among Jews or Gentiles I was always conscious of the fact that I was a Jew

² *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Berlin*, XXXI (1906-07), 58.

³ E. R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* (Chicago, 1927), 105-06.

and he was a Gentile—you can't escape that. You become more conscious of your Jewishness when you marry a Gentile—it brings out conflicts that you hadn't thought of before.

It was found that the arrival of offspring intensifies marital conflict based on cultural differences. The customs associated with birth and religion usually have high social value in a culture, and the parents must decide whether the child is to be circumcized or baptized, whether it will be reared as a Jew or Christian. When the couple is not very emancipated, and particularly if one or both of the spouses are close to their families, so that the group social pressures are strong, such decisions are usually reached after much conflict, because the high social value accorded to these customs by the groups from which the husband and wife come, persists in the attitude of the couple.

Gentile man. Most of the problems that came up before the child came, we forgot. When the child came, however, things were different. I told my wife before we were married that we could be married by a rabbi, but that any children would not be brought up in any religion; when they grew up they could join any religious body they liked. But when she was pregnant she came to me and told me that she wanted the child circumcized if it were a boy, because her father said he wouldn't take the baby in his arms if it wasn't circumcized. This riled me. But the child was a girl.

His Jewish wife. I married him because I thought it didn't make any difference to him whether Jew or Gentile—I thought he was a liberal, broad-minded person. But we had trouble. I had a longing in my heart to please my parents, and when I was pregnant I knew it would be pleasant for them to have the child circumcized. But he resisted it terribly, in spite of all his broad-mindedness. He thought that that would make the child Jewish from the beginning.

The child may be initiated secretly, in order to satisfy the rites of the group with a minimum of conflict with the spouse.

Gentile woman. My husband would not let our boy be baptized, so one day I had him baptized secretly; my conscience was easier after that. I never dared tell my husband about what I had done, and as long as he lived he never knew.

Sometimes no compromise can be effected, and then it may be decided not to have any children.

Jew. We have no children. I had an antagonism against non-Jewish religions. My wife wanted to give any children we might have the same religious training she had. I talked it over with her and I decided, "Well, if that's the way you feel about it, let's not have any children."

THE INTERMARRIED COUPLE AS CARRIERS IN DIFFUSION

Not only does acculturation take place between the intermarried couple, but through social contact with the couple diffusion of customs may extend to their families and friends.

Gentile woman. I learned a great deal about cooking from my mother-in-law, and I passed my recipes on to my friends. A funny thing once happened. Nobody in my family used garlic—they wouldn't think of it—it was only for foreigners. Well, one day I fixed a roast flavored with a garlic according to my mother-in-law's recipe, and they said, "Grace, this is simply delicious!" Then they found out it was the garlic that made it taste so good. Now my whole family uses garlic.

Also, as a result of personal contacts with members of the out-group, loss of prejudice may occur among the relatives and friends of the intermarried couple.

Jew. I believe some of my wife's friends were astonished when they met me. They'd never known a Jew before, and were quite astonished that my interests were the same as theirs; that I liked games, hunting, and swimming; that I could hold my liquor without getting noisy. They'd been taught that Jews were extremely different.

